

To: Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee  
From: Landis Larson, President, North Dakota AFL-CIO  
Re: ARPA Funds  
Date: November 9, 2021

Chairman Holmberg and members of the Senate Appropriations Committee, thank you for the opportunity to share recommendations for the state's use of the ARPA funds.

The top priority for our state's families and workers is increased access to quality and affordable child care in North Dakota. Child care is a critical component of a thriving economy. Access to affordable child care is essential for parents to return to the workforce and maintain quality employment. However, and as many of you and your constituents are already aware, many communities both rural and urban, across North Dakota lack accessible and affordable child care to meet the demand for our state's working families.

This letter, signed by over 20 organizations in North Dakota including the ND Dept of Public Instruction, and by over 200 North Dakotans, calls for a greater investment into child care in our state.

The current proposal in SB 2345 for child care is less than 2% of the \$1 billion. North Dakota KIDS COUNT has created a second set of recommendations that we are providing to this committee today. North Dakota families spend at minimum 13% of their budgets on child care. We are urging the legislature to allocate 13% of the federal ARPA dollars to address the child care crisis in our state. Those recommendations include increasing pay for child care workers and ensuring professional development opportunities are within reach, making sure more North Dakota families are eligible for child care assistance, and extending child care stabilization grants, and expanding Head Start and Early Head Start slots, particularly in tribal communities operating tribal Head Start programs. A more detailed outline is shared in this document, both front and back, from North Dakota KIDS COUNT.

With over \$1 billion available in American Rescue Plan funding, we urge that 13 percent, or \$130 million, much like a family's budget, be spent on child care in North Dakota. Now is the time to invest in child care, a long undervalued industry that plays a key role in a strong economy. There are solutions that build a child care system that works for children, families, and businesses across the state and sets up North Dakota for

long-term success.